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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9968  
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9670  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0505  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0909  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1335  
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC

UNCLAS LAGOS 000229

SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO FAA (AHARRIS)  
TRANSPORTATION TO KSAMPLE, FAA  
STATE PASS TO OPIC  
DAKAR PASS TO FAA (MOIRA KEANE)  
ROME PASS TO TSA REP JOHN HALINSKI

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: CIVIL AVIATION ROUND UP

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Civil Aviation Authorities to Relocate to Abuja  
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11. (U) Summary: Top officials of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Federal Airport Authority, and other civil aviation agencies will relocate to Abuja from Lagos in July 2008. In addition, the high cost of fuel has caused Delta Airlines to postpone indefinitely plans to fly from New York to Lagos. Nigerian Arik Airlines has ambitious plans to wet lease two aircraft for a Lagos to New York route. End Summary.

12. (U) On June 16, news media reported the ordered relocation by the Federal Government of all civil aviation authorities to the Abuja. Dr. Harold DeMurren, Director General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authorities (NCAA), confirmed to EconOff on June 16 that the announcement is true, and the move will probably begin in early July. Richard Aisuebeogun, Managing Director of the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), told EconOff on June 27 that the July relocation will include all agencies except FAAN and the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA). FAAN and NAMA's relocation to Abuja will take place in early 2009. According to sources from commercial airlines, it is likely that the move will only apply to the upper echelon in these civil aviation agencies as the bulk of their operating personnel will remain in Lagos.

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Delta to Change Operation Plans  
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13. (U) Robert Bryan, Commercial Manager of Delta Air Lines West Africa, informed EconOff on June 17 that Delta's plan to commence New York to Lagos flight service has been delayed indefinitely in light of rising fuel prices. (Note: Delta initially planned to launch the New York to Lagos service in February 2008, but then postponed it to December 2008 because of difficulty in obtaining approval from the Nigerian Ministry of Transport. End Note) While Delta Air Lines has made progress toward obtaining the Ministry's approval, Bryan said the indefinite postponement is entirely attributable to fuel cost. Bryan also told EconOff that as of October 28, 2008, Delta's flight from Lagos to Atlanta will change its departure time from 1145 to 2215 to make it easier for passengers coming from other destinations in Nigeria to make the connection.

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FAA Team Concludes Inspector Training System Course  
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¶4. (U) A Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) team concluded training program on June 27, for approximately 20 NCAA inspectors. The course, comprised of three weeks of classroom work and a weeklong implementation drill, focused on tracking and record keeping for safety inspections. The FAA trainers said the Nigerian participants showed commitment and good performance.

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Arik Plans to Use Wetlease to Fly to the U.S.  
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¶5. (U) The Managing Director of Arik Air, one of three Nigerian airlines (Arik, Bellview, and Virgin) approved by the Department of Transportation to conduct flights to the United States using wetleased aircraft, told EconOff on May 5 that Arik plans to establish a Lagos to New York route by November 2008. Arik has signed a letter of intent to purchase two new aircraft from an undisclosed source. Provided the purchase goes through, Arik will dry lease the new aircraft to an airline from a Category 1 country, then wetlease it back. According to Delta's Bryan, Bellview is experiencing difficulty finding a partner that will wetlease it and aircraft because of its poor accident record. (Note: The GON temporarily suspended Bellview's operating license in December 2005 after one of its Boeing 737's crashed shortly after takeoff in Abuja killing all 117 people on board. End Note)

¶6. (U) This cable was cleared with Embassy Abuja.

Hudson